



WOMAN'S AUXILIARY

TO THE CALIFORNIA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Public Relations

THE PRIMARY purpose of an Auxiliary's public relations program is to help the public at large understand the functions, policies and aims of the medical profession. One phase of the work delegated to us is to promote educational and service activities relating to health and medical care. Another is to make each Auxiliary member aware of her responsibility as an ambassador of good will for the medical profession in her daily contacts. Thus, collectively and individually, the Auxiliary helps mold public opinion for the improvement of the health of the people and the advancement of medical service.

There is no doubt that the heart of the public relations program is planning. It is a broad field. It isn't something which can be accomplished by a single program or project; it's "everything we do, or fail to do; our every act, and word and attitude which creates an impression on the public." It takes all of us working together to be most effective in accomplishing this end.

California, with the largest Auxiliary in the United States, has contributed its share to the long list of Auxiliary accomplishments in the field of public relations. Nurse recruitment is by far our most effective public relations project. The auxiliaries sponsor over ninety Future Nurse Clubs, an excellent record when one realizes that there are 154 such clubs in California, 138 of them receiving aid from our nurse recruitment program. This past year alone 228 nursing scholarships were given.

In the year 1956-57 the Auxiliary contributed \$7,639.68 to the American Medical Education Foundation. Twenty-four auxiliaries reported 2,437 renewals to *Today's Health* and 628 new subscriptions—3,065 subscriptions in all. Sixteen counties are active in Civil Defense. We have an active and alert legislative program. Yes, all this is public relations.

This year the National Auxiliary hopes that each

state and county Auxiliary will (1) review its objectives and the relation of its activities to it, (2) build a closer working relationship with its medical society, through an orientation program on the objectives of the A.M.A. and the Auxiliary and through the partnership approach on public service projects; and (3) explore and try out some of the newer methods for understanding how groups work and solve problems together.

Perhaps the best public relations for the medical profession is done when physicians' wives serve on health boards in their own community. Although a wife so serving may not be directly representing the Auxiliary, she nevertheless is a liaison between the two groups. Each physician's wife is a power in herself in promoting public relations. It can truthfully be said that public relations is every member's responsibility, in what she does with her spare time, how she meets people or answers the telephone, in conversation among friends and in her work as a citizen, church or club member. All of these have a direct bearing on promoting understanding between the medical profession and the public.

The program and projects of the Auxiliary are of no value unless their influence reaches the local level. Our contribution to the health of the community creates our public relations.

As we start our Auxiliary year for 1957-58 we should strive to remember that we are a working community service group, that we can do our most productive work under the direct guidance of the Medical Association, and that we must continually reevaluate our accomplishments to help us judge whether we are carrying out our objectives. We concur with our national president that "health is a joint endeavor," and we shall strive by the means outlined above to make our organization of service to society and thus to the medical profession.

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California Medical Association*